

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 10070 221632Z

60

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SR-02

ORM-03 AID-20 IO-14 SAM-01 DRC-01 OPR-02 EUR-25 /160 W

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R 221520Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9823

DIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 10070

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PLO LE IS

SUBJECT: LEBANESE-FEDAYEEN RELATIONS

REF: BEIRUT 9020

1. MORNING OF AUG. 21 SAW SEVERAL HOURS OF WILD SHOOT-
ING, DYNAMITING, TIRE-BURNING AND GENERAL CIVIL DIS-
RUPTION CARRIED OUT BY FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS AND THEIR
LOCAL SYMPATHIZERS IN SIDON, OSTENSIBLY IN PROTEST
OVER KILLING OF ONE FEDA'I FROM NEARBY
REFUGEE CAMP IN INCIDENT INVOLVING LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES
LATE AUG. 20. (ONE LEBANESE POLICEMAN ALSO WOUNDED.) BY MID-
MORNING, HOWEVER, COMBINED EFFORTS OF PLO "MILITARY POLICE"
(ELEMENTS OF PALESTINE ARMED STRUGGLE COMMAND DIRECTED
BY FATAH'S ABU ZA'IM), LOCAL LEFTIST POLITICIANS AND
LEBANESE SECURITY FORCES MANAGED TO RESTORE QUIET. SUTUATION
REMAINS FAIRLY TENSE, ALTHOUGH REPORTS OF ADDITIONAL
DISTURBANCES MORNING AUG. 22 HAVE THUS FAR PROVED UNFOUNDED.
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2. COMMENT: HIGHLY-PLACED LEBANESE ARMY SOURCES (E.G., DEPUTY COS FOR OPERATIONS, BRIG. KANAAN) CONTINUE BELIEVE THAT 'ARAFAT AND REST OF PLO/FATAH LEADERSHIP ARE STILL SINCERELY TRYING AVOID TROUBLE WITH GOL FOR AT LEAST IMMEDIATE FUTURE (REFTEL). THEY REPORT THAT 'ARAFAT AND CO. REACTED QUICKLY IN EFFORT TO CONTAIN AUG. 20 SHOOTING INCIDENT AND AVOID REPERCUSSIONS IN SIDON OR ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON. FACT THAT ABOVE DISTURBANCES, HOWEVER CIRCUMSCRIBED, TOOK PLACE DESPITE THESE PRECAUTIONS IS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF (A) VOLATILE SITUATION PREVAILING IN SIDON, WHERE FEDAYEEN--ALL HEAVILY ARMED AND MANY POORLY DISCIPLINED--STILL OCCUPY STRATEGIC POINTS IN CITY IN ADDITION TO SURROUNDING REFUGEE CAMPS, AND (B) INABILITY OF PLO LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE COMPLETE OBSERVANCE OF ITS ORDERS BY "CRAZIER" FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS. AS WAS CASE WITH INCIDENT WHICH OCCURRED THREE WEEKS AGO IN BEIRUT SUBURB (REFTEL), LATEST SIDON EVENTS CAN ONLY INCREASE TENSIONS AND MAKE TRIGGER-FINGERS ITCHIER ON BOTH SIDES, THUS INCREASING LIKELIHOOD OF FURTHER--AND POTENTIALLY MORE SERIOUS--INCIDENTS IN DAYS AHEAD. ALTHOUGH 'ARAFAT APPARENTLY HAS INDEED PLACED CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS (EXCLUDING SEABORNE RAIDS) AGAINST ISRAEL UNDER WRAPS FOR TIME BEING, TERRORIST ACTIVITIES BY MAVERICK ELEMENTS DESIRING TO UPSET HIS POLICIES CAN STILL OCCUR.

GODLEY

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